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THE COPY OF THE
FIRST LETTER
OF COLUMBUS
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THE FIRST LETTER
OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

TO THE NOBLE LORD

RAPHAEL SANCHEZ

ANNOUNCING

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

REPRODUCED IN FAC-SIMILE FROM THE COPY OF THE LATIN VERSION
OF 1493 NOW IN THE

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WITH A NEW TRANSLATION



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THE LATIN VERSION OF 1493
OF THE
FIRST LETTER OF COLUMBUS
TO
RAPHAEL SANCHEZ, ANNOUNCING THE
DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

[Reproduced in fac-simile by the heliotype process; with a bibliographical note and a translation.]

THE Bulletin of the Boston Public Library for April, 1890 (vol. ix., p. 207), gave an account of the purchases made for the Library in the preceding February, at the sale in New York city of the books of the late Mr. Barlow. Among them was a copy of *The Latin Version of the First Letter of Columbus announcing the Discovery of America*. Nothing is known about the history of this volume before its purchase in 1831 by Colonel Thomas Aspinwall, formerly American consul at London. It was included in that portion of his library sold to Mr. Barlow, by whom a photographic fac-simile of it was issued in 1875, in an edition limited to fifty copies.

A bibliographical notice of the various editions of this celebrated letter can be found in the Bulletin for April, 1875 (vol. ii., p. 340). In 1886 this was greatly expanded by Justin

Winsor into a note upon *The Letters of Columbus*, contained in *The Narrative and Critical History of America* (vol. ii., pp. 46-51), where a full account is given of all that was then known about seven editions in Latin, and one in Spanish. Afterwards, in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, February, 1890 (second series, vol. v., p. 306), he reported that an eighth in Latin had very recently been discovered; also two more in Spanish, one in folio, the other in quarto. The latter has since passed into the possession of Mr. Brayton Ives of New York. A notice of the three editions in Spanish, based upon an article in the London *Athenæum*, August 31, 1889, appeared in the New York *Nation*, November 14, 1889. Besides these three editions, several varieties of the Spanish text are known to exist in manuscript; but none is believed to represent the original from the hand of Columbus.

This letter was immediately translated from the Spanish into Latin by a certain Leander de Cosco (whose name in some editions is erroneously given as Aliander). Opinions differ as to whether this translation was made in Spain or in Italy. A. H. Major (*Select Letters of Columbus*, 2d edit., 1870, p. cxxxiii) thinks De Cosco was a Spaniard, and that the translation was made in Spain. Henry Harrisse (*Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima*), p. 13, believes it was made in Italy, principally for the reason that a Latin epigram, appended to all the printed editions of it, was written by an Italian bishop.

Within a year, eight different editions of this translation were issued, in thin quartos, or octavos, in black-letter type; — five in Rome, two in Paris, and one in Antwerp. Of the five Roman editions, that one printed by Stephen Planck, to which the Aspinwall-Barlow copy belongs, is regarded as the earliest by

Harrissee (*Bib. Amer. Vet.*, No. 1). This claim, however, is contested by other eminent authorities. Lenox considers it the second (Reprint of Nickolaus Syllacius *De insulis Meridiani atque Indici Maris super inventis*, Append. B, p. xliii); while Bartlett classes it as the third (*Catalogue of the Carter-Brown Library*, Part i, No. 7). This is also Major's opinion (*Select Letters of Columbus*, p. cix).

Whatever the truth may be in regard to its rank in priority, the volume is of very great rarity, as only four other copies of this edition are known, two in the British Museum, one in the Royal Library at Munich, and one in that of Mr. Brayton Ives in New York.

As the Spanish letter is addressed to Luis de Santangel, and the Latin to Gabriel Sanchez (who, in this edition and some others, is improperly called Raphael Sanxis), it seems highly probable that the Spanish and Latin printed texts were derived from different, though similar, originals; this is confirmed by the circumstance that the two texts differ considerably from each other. Harrissee, however, states that the Latin, "with the exception of variations in the use of the contracted letters, . . . is the same for all" (*Bib. Amer. Vet.*, p. 7). I have not found this to be the case. In comparing this text with that of the fac-simile recently published by Mr. John S. Kennedy, from the copy of the edition, with woodcuts, now in the Lenox Library at New York, I have noticed several differences, besides one that has been often instanced, that the heading of the Lenox copy reads *in mari Indico*, instead of *Indie supra Gangem*. Thus, on fol. 1 it reads *Guanahanyim*, instead of *Guanahanim*. On fol. 2 it reads ungrammatically, *His per tres dies*, instead of *Hi per tres dies*. At the bottom of fol. 2 it reads,

seri pacisque, instead of *seri pascique*. This same error is also found in the Paris editions. Near the middle of fol. 4 the abbreviated word *tñ* (tamen) is inserted between *mecum* and *qui semper putant*. Near the middle of fol. 5 is the reading *cologna*, instead of *colonia*. At the bottom of this same fol. 5 there is an important variation; after *discrimine* the word *populari* is omitted; while the words *facile detinere* are inserted after *excedunt*. Finally, at the bottom of fol. 6 the Lenox copy has the erroneous reading of the Roman Silber, and Paris editions, *hydrophilatorum* instead of *hydolatrorum*.

This rare volume has been reproduced by the heliotype process, by the Trustees of the Boston Public Library, in order that it may be more widely distributed.

As it originally appeared in the Bulletin for October, 1890 (vol. ix., p. 392), a translation by Mr. R. H. Major was prefixed to it; but as that was made from a different Latin text, at the request of my colleagues, I have prepared a careful literal translation of this particular text.

HENRY W. HAYNES.

BOSTON, February, 1891.

A letter of Christopher Colom, to whom our age is much indebted, about the recently discovered islands of India beyond the Ganges; in search of which he had been sent eight months before under the auspices and at the expense of the most invincible Ferdinand, King of the Spains; sent to the illustrious Lord Raphael Sanxis, Treasurer of the same most serene King; — which Aliander de Cosco, a noble and learned gentleman, has translated from the Spanish language into the Latin; April 29, 1493; in the First year of the Pontificate of Alexander the Sixth.



S I know that it will afford you pleasure that I have brought my undertaking to a successful result, I have determined to write you this letter to inform you of everything that has been done and discovered in this voyage of mine.

On the thirty-third day after leaving Cadiz I came into the Indian Sea, where I discovered many islands inhabited by numerous people. I took possession of all of them for our most fortunate King by making public proclamation and unfurling his standard, no one making any resistance. To the first of them I have given the name of our blessed Saviour, trusting in

whose aid I had reached this and all the rest; but the Indians call it Guanahani. To each of the others also I gave a new name, ordering one to be called Sancta Maria de Concepcion, another Fernandina, another Hysabella, another Johana; and so with all the rest. As soon as we reached the island which I have just said was called Johana, I sailed along its coast some considerable distance towards the West, and found it to be so large, without any apparent end, that I believed it was not an island, but a continent, a province of Cathay. But I saw neither towns nor cities lying on the seaboard, only some villages and country farms, with whose inhabitants I could not get speech, because they fled as soon as they beheld us. I continued on, supposing I should come upon some city, or country-houses. At last, finding that no discoveries rewarded our further progress, and that this course was leading us towards the North, which I was desirous of avoiding, as it was now winter in these regions, and it had always been my intention to proceed Southwards, and the winds also were favorable to such desires, I concluded not to attempt any other adventures; so, turning back, I came again to a certain harbor, which I had remarked. From there I sent two of our men into the country to learn whether there was any king or cities in that land. They journeyed for three days, and found innumerable people and habitations, but small and having no fixed government; on which account

they returned. Meanwhile I had learned from some Indians, whom I had seized at this place, that this country was really an island. Consequently I continued along towards the East, as much as 322 miles, always hugging the shore. Where was the very extremity of the island, from there I saw another island to the Eastwards, distant 54 miles from this Johana, which I named Hispana; and proceeded to it, and directed my course for 564 miles East by North as it were, just as I had done at Johana.

The island called Johana, as well as the others in its neighborhood, is exceedingly fertile. It has numerous harbors on all sides, very safe and wide, above comparison with any I have ever seen. Through it flow many very broad and health-giving rivers; and there are in it numerous very lofty mountains. All these islands are very beautiful, and of quite different shapes; easy to be traversed, and full of the greatest variety of trees reaching to the stars. I think these never lose their leaves, as I saw them looking as green and lovely as they are wont to be in the month of May in Spain. Some of them were in leaf, and some in fruit; each flourishing in the condition its nature required. The nightingale was singing and various other little birds, when I was rambling among them in the month of November. There are also in the island called Johana seven or eight kinds of palms, which as readily surpass ours in height and beauty as do all the other trees,

herbs and fruits. There are also wonderful pine-woods, fields and extensive meadows; birds of various kinds, and honey; and all the different metals, except iron.

In the island, which I have said before was called Hispana, there are very lofty and beautiful mountains, great farms, groves and fields, most fertile both for cultivation and for pasturage, and well adapted for constructing buildings. The convenience of the harbors in this island, and the excellence of the rivers, in volume and salubrity, surpass human belief, unless one should see them. In it the trees, pasture-lands and fruits differ much from those of Johana. Besides, this Hispana abounds in various kinds of spices, gold and metals. The inhabitants of both sexes of this and of all the other islands I have seen, or of which I have any knowledge, always go as naked as they came into the world, except that some of the women cover their private parts with leaves or branches, or a veil of cotton, which they prepare themselves for this purpose. They are all, as I said before, unprovided with any sort of iron, and they are destitute of arms, which are entirely unknown to them, and for which they are not adapted; not on account of any bodily deformity, for they are well made, but because they are timid and full of terror. They carry, however, canes dried in the sun in place of weapons, upon whose roots they fix a wooden shaft, dried and sharpened to a point. But

they never dare to make use of these; for it has often happened, when I have sent two or three of my men to some of their villages to speak with the inhabitants, that a crowd of Indians has sallied forth; but when they saw our men approaching, they speedily took to flight, parents abandoning their children, and children their parents. This happened not because any loss or injury had been inflicted upon any of them. On the contrary I gave whatever I had, cloth and many other things, to whomsoever I approached, or with whom I could get speech, without any return being made to me; but they are by nature fearful and timid. But when they see that they are safe, and all fear is banished, they are very guileless and honest, and very liberal of all they have. No one refuses the asker anything that he possesses; on the contrary they themselves invite us to ask for it. They manifest the greatest affection towards all of us, exchanging valuable things for trifles, content with the very least thing or nothing at all. But I forbade giving them a very trifling thing and of no value, such as bits of plates, dishes, or glass; also nails and straps; although it seemed to them, if they could get such, that they had acquired the most beautiful jewels in the world. For it chanced that a sailor received for a single strap as much weight of gold as three gold solidi; and so others for other things of less price, especially for new blancas, and for some gold coins, for which they gave whatever the seller asked;

for instance, an ounce and a half or two ounces of gold, or thirty or forty pounds of cotton, with which they were already familiar. So too for pieces of hoops, jugs, jars and pots they bartered cotton and gold like beasts. This I forbade, because it was plainly unjust; and I gave them many beautiful and pleasing things, which I had brought with me, for no return whatever, in order to win their affection, and that they might become Christians and inclined to love our King and Queen and Princes and all the people of Spain; and that they might be eager to search for and gather and give to us what they abound in and we greatly need.

They do not practice idolatry; on the contrary, they believe that all strength, all power, in short all blessings, are from Heaven, and that I have come down from there with these ships and sailors; and in this spirit was I received everywhere, after they had got over their fear. They are neither lazy nor awkward; but, on the contrary, are of an excellent and acute understanding. Those who have sailed these seas give excellent accounts of everything; but they have never seen men wearing clothes, or ships like ours.

As soon as I had come into this sea, I took by force some Indians from the first island, in order that they might learn from us, and at the same time tell us what they knew about affairs in these regions. This succeeded admirably; for in a short time we understood

them and they us both by gesture and signs and words; and they were of great service to us. They are coming now with me, and have always believed that I have come from Heaven, notwithstanding the long time they have been, and still remain, with us. They were the first who told this wherever we went, one calling to another, with a loud voice, *Come, Come, you will see Men from Heaven.* Whereupon both women and men, children and adults, young and old, laying aside the fear they had felt a little before, flocked eagerly to see us, a great crowd thronging about our steps, some bringing food, and others drink, with greatest love and incredible good will.

In each island are many boats made of solid wood; though narrow, yet in length and shape similar to our two-bankers, but swifter in motion, and managed by oars only. Some of them are large, some small, and some of medium size; but most are larger than a two-banker rowed by 18 oars. With these they sail to all the islands, which are innumerable; engaging in traffic and commerce with each other. I saw some of these biremes, or boats, which carried 70 or 80 rowers. In all these islands there is no difference in the appearance of the inhabitants, and none in their customs and language, so that all understand one another. This is a circumstance most favorable for what I believe our most serene King especially desires, that is, their conversion to the holy faith of Christ; for which, indeed,

so far as I could understand, they are very ready and prone.

I have told already how I sailed in a straight course along the island of Johana from West to East 322 miles. From this voyage and the extent of my journeyings I can say that this Johana is larger than England and Scotland together. For beyond the aforesaid 322 miles, in that portion which looks toward the West, there are two more provinces, which I did not visit. One of them the Indians call Anan, and its inhabitants are born with tails. These provinces extend 180 miles, as I learned from the Indians, whom I am bringing with me, and who are well acquainted with all these islands.

The distance around Hispana is greater than all Spain from Colonia to Fontarabia; as is readily proved, because its fourth side, which I myself traversed in a straight course from West to East, stretches 540 miles. This island is to be coveted, and not to be despised when acquired. As I have already taken possession of all the others, as I have said, for our most invincible King, and the rule over them is entirely committed to the said King, so in this one I have taken special possession of a certain large town, in a most convenient spot, well suited for all profit and commerce, to which I have given the name of the Nativity of our Lord; and there I ordered a fort to be built forthwith, which ought to be finished now. In it I left as many men as seemed necessary, with all kinds of arms, and pro-

visions sufficient for more than a year; also a caravel and men to build others, skilled not only in this trade but in others. I secured for them the good will and remarkable friendship of the King of the island; for these people are very affectionate and kind; so much so that the aforesaid King took a pride in my being called his brother. Although they should change their minds, and wish to harm those who have remained in the fort, they cannot; because they are without arms, go naked and are too timid; so that, in truth, those who hold the aforesaid fort can lay waste the whole of that island, without any danger to themselves, provided they do not violate the rules and instructions I have given them.

In all these islands, as I understand, every man is satisfied with only one wife, except the princes or kings, who are permitted to have 20. The women appear to work more than the men; but I could not well understand whether they have private property, or not; for I saw that what every one had was shared with the others, especially meals, provisions and such things. I found among them no monsters, as very many expected; but men of great deference and kind; nor are they black like the Ethiopians; but they have long, straight hair. They do not dwell where the rays of the Sun have most power, although the Sun's heat is very great there, as this region is twenty-six degrees distant from the equinoctial line. From the sum-

mits of the mountains there comes great cold, but the Indians mitigate it by being inured to the weather, and by the help of very hot food, which they consume frequently and in immoderate quantities.

I saw no monsters, neither did I hear accounts of any such except in an island called Charis, the second as one crosses over from Spain to India, which is inhabited by a certain race regarded by their neighbors as very ferocious. They eat human flesh, and make use of several kinds of boats by which they cross over to all the Indian islands, and plunder and carry off whatever they can. But they differ in no respect from the others except in wearing their hair long after the fashion of women. They make use of bows and arrows made of reeds, having pointed shafts fastened to the thicker portion, as we have before described. For this reason they are considered to be ferocious, and the other Indians consequently are terribly afraid of them; but I consider them of no more account than the others. They have intercourse with certain women who dwell alone upon the island of Mateurin, the first as one crosses from Spain to India. These women follow none of the usual occupations of their sex; but they use bows and arrows like those of their husbands, which I have described, and protect themselves with plates of copper, which is found in the greatest abundance among them.

I was informed that there is another island larger

than the aforesaid Hispana, whose inhabitants have no hair; and that there is a greater abundance of gold in it than in any of the others. Some of the inhabitants of these islands and of the others I have seen I am bringing over with me to bear testimony to what I have reported. Finally, to sum up in a few words the chief results and advantages of our departure and speedy return, I make this promise to our most invincible Sovereigns, that, if I am supported by some little assistance from them, I will give them as much gold as they have need of, and in addition spices, cotton and mastic, which is found only in Chios, and as much aloes-wood, and as many heathen slaves as their majesties may choose to demand; besides these, rhubarb and other kinds of drugs, which I think the men I left in the fort before alluded to, have already discovered, or will do so; as I have myself delayed nowhere longer than the winds compelled me, except while I was providing for the construction of a fort in the city of Nativity, and for making all things safe.

Although these matters are very wonderful and unheard of, they would have been much more so, if ships to a reasonable amount had been furnished me. But what has been accomplished is great and wonderful, and not at all proportionate to my deserts, but to the sacred Christian faith, and to the piety and religion of our Sovereigns. For what the mind of man could not compass the spirit of God has

granted to mortals. For God is wont to listen to his servants who love his precepts, even in impossibilities, as has happened to me in the present instance, who have accomplished what human strength has hitherto never attained. For if any one has written or told anything about these islands, all have done so either obscurely or by guesswork, so that it has almost seemed to be fabulous.

Therefore let King and Queen and Princes, and their most fortunate realms, and all other Christian provinces, let us all return thanks to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has bestowed so great a victory and reward upon us; let there be processions and solemn sacrifices prepared; let the churches be decked with festal boughs; let Christ rejoice upon Earth as he rejoices in Heaven, as he foresees that so many souls of so many people heretofore lost are to be saved; and let us be glad not only for the exaltation of our faith, but also for the increase of temporal prosperity, in which not only Spain but all Christendom is about to share.

As these things have been accomplished so have they been briefly narrated. Farewell.

CHRISTOPHER COLOM,
Admiral of the Ocean Fleet.

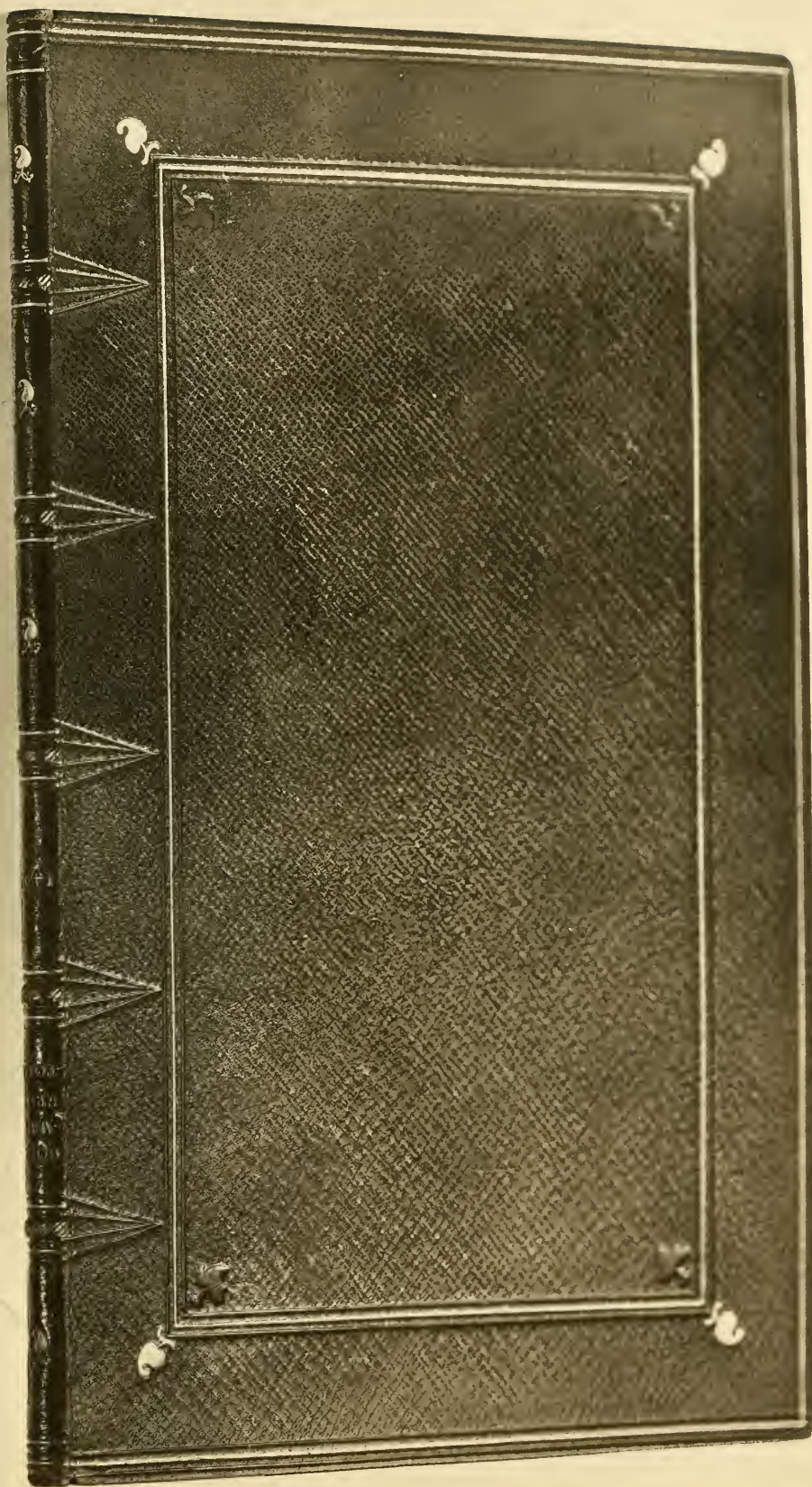
LISBON, March 14th.

AN EPIGRAM.

R. L. de Corbaria,¹ Bishop of Montepeloso, to the
most invincible King of Spain.

Now no land need be added to the triumphs of Spain,
For the world was too small for power so great;
Now a region far hidden beneath the Eastern waves
Will add to thy titles, O great lord of the Bætis.
Wherefore to Columbus, its discoverer, must deservedly be paid
Thanks; — but greater be rendered to God most high,
Who is preparing new realms to be conquered by thee and by himself.
It is best for thee to be at the same time brave and pious.

¹A pseudonyme of Berandus, or Leonard de Carninis, Bishop of Monte-peloso in the Kingdom of Naples, from A.D. 1491-1498. HARRISSE, *Bib. Amer. Vet.*, p. 8.



Epistola Christofoꝝi Colom' : cui etas nostra multū debet: de
Insulis Indię supra Gangem nuper inuentis. Ad quas perquisi-
rendas octauo antea mense auspicijs ⁊ gre inuictissimi Fernan-
di Hispaniarum Regis missus fuerat: ad Magnificum dñm Ra-
phaelem Sanxis: eiusdem serenissimi Regis Tesaurariū missas
quam nobilis ac litteratus vir Aliander de Cosco ab Hispano
Idiomate in latinum conuertit : tertio kal's Maij. M. cccc. xcij.
Pontificatus Alexandri Sexti Anno Primo.

Quoniam susceptę prouintię rem perfectam me cōsecutum
fuisse gratum tibi fore scio: has constitui exarare: quę te
vniuscuiusq; rei in hoc nostro itinere gessę inuentęq; ad-
moneant: Tricesimotertio die postq; Gadibus discessi in mare
Indicū perueni: vbi plurimas insulas innumeris habitatas ho-
minibus repperi: quarum omnium pro foelicissimo Rege nostro
preconio celebrato ⁊ vexillis extensis contradicente nemine pos-
sessionem accepi: primęq; earum diui Saluatoris nomen impo-
si: cuius fretus auxilio tam ad hanc: q̃ ad ceteras alias perue-
nimus. Eam hō Indi Guanabanin vocant. Aliarum etiā vnā
quāq; nouo nomine nuncupauī. Quippe aliā insulam Sanctę
Marię Conceptionis. aliam Fernandinā. aliam Dysabellā.
aliam Johanā. ⁊ sic de reliquis appellari iussi. Quamprimum
in eam insulam quā dudum Johanā vocari dixi appulimus: iux-
ta eius lītus occidentem versus aliquantulum processi: tamq;
eam magnā nullo reperto sine inueni: vt non insulam: sed conti-
nentem Chatai prouinciam esse crediderim: nulla tñ videns op-
pida municipiaue in maritimis sita consinib; p̃ter aliquos vi-
cos ⁊ predia rustica: cum quorū incolis loqui nequibam. quare si-
mul ac nos videbant surripiebant fugam. Progrediebar vltas:
existimans aliquā me urbem villasue inuenturum. Deniq; vidēs
q; longe admodum progressis nihil noui emergebat: ⁊ hmoiā viā
nos ad Septentrionem deferebat: q; ipse fugere exoptabā: terris
etenim regnabat bruma: ad Austrumq; erat in voto cōtenderet

nec minus venti flagrantib⁹ succedebāt . cōstiti i alios nō ope
riri successus: et sic retrocedens ad portū quendā quem signaue/
ram sum reuersus: vnde duos hoies ex nostris in terrā nīlī . qui
inuestigarēt esset ne Rex in ea prouincia vrbesue aliquę . Hi pē/
tres dies ambularunt inuenerūtq; innumeros populos et habita/
tiones paruas tñ et absq; vllō regimine : quapropter redierunt .
Interea ego iam intellexerā a qbusdam Indis quos ibidem su/
sceperā quō bñōi prouincia insula quidem erat: et sic perrexi ori/
entem versus eius semp stringēs littoza vsq; ad miliaria .ccc.cxiij
vbi ipsius insule sunt extrema: hinc aliā insulam ad orientē pro/
specti distantē ab hac Jobana miliarib⁹ .liiij . quā protinus Dispa/
nam dixi: in eamq; concessi et direxi iter quasi per Septentrionē
quemadmodū in Jobana ad orientem miliaria .xlxiij . quę dicta
Jobana et alię ibidem insule q̄fertilissime existunt . Hęc multis
atq; turissimis et latis nec alijs quos vnq; viderim comparādis
portibus et circumdata . multi maximi et salubres hanc interflu/
unt fluij multi quoq; et eminentissimi in ea sunt montes Oēs
bē insule sunt pulcherrimę et varijs distincię figuris: pūgę et ma/
xima arborū varietate sidera lambentiū pleng: quas nunq; folijs
primari credo . Quippe vidi eas ita virentes atq; decoras: ceu mē/
se Maio in Hispania solent esse: quāq; alię florētes: alię fructuo/
sę: alię in alio statu s̄m vnū seu iusq; qualitātē vigeant: garrie/
bat philomena et alię passerēs vari. ac inumeri mēse Nouembrijs
quo ipse per eas deambulabā . Sunt p̄terea in dicta insula Joba/
na septē vel octo palmarū genera q̄ proceritate et pulchritudine
quēadmodū ceterę oēs arbores: herbę: fructusq; n̄ras facile exu/
perāt . Sūt et mirabiles pīn⁹ agri et prata vastissima . varię aues .
varia mella . varięq; metalla ferro excepto . In ea aut quā Dispa/
nam supra dixim⁹ nūcupari maximi sunt mōtes ac pulchri . va/
sta rura . nemoza . campi feracissimi seri pasciq; et p̄dendis p̄difici/
is aptissimi . Portuū in hac insula cōmoditas et prestantia flumi/
nū copia salubritate admixta hoīm . q̄ nīlī quis rīderit: credulitę
teq; superat . Dui⁹ arbores pascua et fruct⁹ multū ab illis Jobanę
differunt . Hęc preterea Hispana diuerso aromatis genere . auro .

metallisq; abundat. cuius quidem et oium aliarum quas ego vidi et
quarum cognitionem habeo incolę vtriusq; sexus nudi semper ince-
dunt quęadmodum edunt in lucem: ppter aliquas feminas: q̄ fo-
lio frondeue aliqua aut bombicino velo pudenda operiunt. qđ
ipsę sibi ad id negocii parant. Carent ii oēs (vt supra dixi) quor-
cūq; genere ferri. carēt et armis r̄pote sibi ignotis nec ad ea sunt
apti. nō ppter corporis deformitatem cū sint bene formati: sed
q̄a sunt timidi ac pleni formidine. gestant tñ pro armis arundin-
es sole puestas: in quarum radicib; hastile quoddā. ligneū siccū et
in mucronem attenuatū figunt: neq; ijs audent iugiter vti: nā se-
pe euenit cū miserim duos vel tres boies ex meis ad aliquas vil-
las vt cū earum loquerent incolis: exisse agmen glomeratū ex In-
dis: et vbi nros appropinquare videbant fugā celeriter arripuisse
se despictis a patre liberis et contra. et hoc nō q̄ cuiuspiam eorū dā-
num aliqđ vel iniuria illata fuerit: imo ad quoscūq; appuli et q̄-
bus cū verbum facere potui: quicquid habebā sum elargitus: pan-
num aliq; p̄multu nulla mihi facta versura: sed sunt natura pa-
uidi ac timidi. Ceterę vbi se cernunt tutos oī metu repulso: sunt
admodum simplices ac bonę fidei et in oīb; quę habent liberalissi-
mi: roganti qđ possidet inficiat nemo: quin ipsi nos ad id poscē-
dū inuitāt. Maximū erga oēs amorē p̄ferunt: dant quęq; ma-
gna pro paruis: minima l̄ re nihiloue p̄tenti. ego attñ p̄hibui ne-
tā minia et nulli; p̄cij hisce darent: vt sunt lances. parapsidū.
vitriq; fragmenta. itē clauī ligulę: quanq̄ si hoc poterāt adipisci
videbāt eis pulcherrima mūdi possidere focalia Accidit. n. quę-
dā nauitā tantū auri pondus habuisse pro vna ligula. quāti-
sunt tres aurei solidi. et sic alios pro alijs minoris p̄cij: p̄sertim
pro blanquis nouis: quibusdā nūmis aureis: p̄ q̄b; habēdis da-
bant quicquid petebat vēditōr: puta vnciam cū dimidia et duas
auri: vel triginta et quadraginta bombicis pondo: quam ipsi itaq;
nouerant. item arcum. amphorę. hydre. doliiq; fragmenta bom-
bice et auro tanq̄ bestię comparabant. quod quia iniquum sane
erat. vetui: dediq; eis multa pulchra et grata q̄ mecū tulerā nullo
iterueniēte p̄mio: vt eos mihi facili; p̄ciliarem figentq; xp̄icolę

et sint pioni in amorem erga Regem Reginā principemq; nos-
tros et vniuersas gentes Hispaniæ ac studeāt perquirere: coacer-
uare eaq; nobis tradere quib; ipsi affluunt et nos magnopere in-
digemus. Nullam i; norunt hydolatriam: imo firmissime credūt
omnem vim: oēm potentiam: oīa deniq; bona esse in coelo: meq;
inde cum his nauibus et nautis descēdisse: atq; hoc animo ubiq;
fui susceptus post q̃ metum repulerant. Nec sunt segnes aut ru-
des: quin summi ac perspicacis ingenij: et homines qui transire/
tant mare illud nō sine admiratōe vniuscuiusq; rei rationē red-
dunt: sed nunq; viderūt gentes vestitas neq; naues bmoī. Ego
statim atq; ad mare illud perueni e prima insula quosdā Indos
violenter arripui: qui ediscerent a nobis et nos pariter docerent
ea: quoz ipsi in i;scē partibus cognitionem habebant. et ex voto
successit: nam breui nos ipsos et i; nos tum gestu ac signis tum
verbis intellexerunt: magnosq; nobis fuere emolumento: veniūt
modo mecum: qui semper putant me desiluisse e coelo: q̃uis diu
nobiscum versati fuerint hodieq; versentur. et i; erant primi qui
id quocunq; appellabamus nuntiabant: alij deinceps alijs ela-
ta voce di. ctes: Venite venite et videbitis gentes ethereas. Quā
ob rem tam femine q̃ viri: tam impuberes q̃ adulti: tā iuuenes
q̃ senes depolita formidine paulo ante pcepta nos certatim vise-
bant magna iter stipante caterua alijs cibum alijs potum affe-
rentibus maximo cum amore ac beniuolentia incredibili. Habet
vnaqueq; insula multas scaphas solidi ligni: et si angustas lon-
gitudine tñ ac forma nostris biremibus similes: cursu aut velox-
tiores. Reguntur remis tantūmodo. Hæc quedaz sunt magnæ:
quedam parue: quedā in medio consistūt. Plures tñ biremi que
remiget duodeuiginti transtris maiores: cū quibus in oēs illas
insulas: que innumere sunt: traicitur: cumq; i; suam mercatu-
ram exercent et inter eos comertia fiunt. Aliquas ego harum bi-
remiū seu scaphaz vidi q̃ vehebant septuaginta et octuaginta re-
miges. In omnibus i; insulis nulla est diuersitas inter gentis
effigies: nulla in moribus atq; loquela: quin oēs se intelligunt

ad inuicem: quæ res perutilis est ad id quod serenissimū Regē nūm
croptare precipue reor: scz eorū ad scām xpī fidem puerionem.
cui quidem quantū intelligere potui facillimi sunt et prouisi. Dixi
quemadmodū sum progressus antea insulam Jobanā per rectū
tramitem occasus in orientem miliaria .cccxxi. fm quā riam et
interuallum itineris possum dicere hanc Jobanā esse maiorem
Anglia et Scotia simul: nāq; vltra dicta .cccxxi. passuū milia in
ea parte quæ ad occidentem prospectat duæ: quas nō petij: super
sunt prouinciæ: quarū alterā Indi Anan vocant cuius accolæ cau
dati nascuntur. Tendunt in longitudinez ad miliaria .clxxx. vt
ab his quos rebo mecū Indis percepi: qui oīs has callent insu
las. Hispanæ ho ambit? maior est tota Hispania a Colonia vsq;
ad fontem ravidum. Hincq; facile arguitur quod quartum eius latus
quod ipse per rectā lineā occidentis in orientem traiecit miliaria
continet .dcl. Hæc insula est affectanda et affectata nō spernenda
In qua et si aliax oīm vt dixi pro inuictissimo Rege nostro solen
niter possessionem accepi: earūq; imperium dicto Regi penitus
cōmittitur: in oportuno tñ loco atq; omni lucro et cōmercio
condecēti cuiusdā magnæ ville: cui Natuiatatis dñi nomen dei
dimus: possessionem peculiariter accepi: ibiq; arcem quandam
erigere extemplo iussi: quæ modo iam debet esse pacta: in qua ho
mines qui necessarii sunt vñ cū omni armoz genere et vltra an
num victu oportuno reliqui. Itē quandā carauellam et pro alijs
construendis tam in hac arte q̃ in ceteris peritos: ac eiusdē in
sulæ Regis erga eos beniuolentiam et familiaritatem incredibilē
Sunt enim gentes illæ amabiles admodum et benignæ: eo quod Rex
predictus me fratrē suū dici gloriabatur. Et si aīum reuocarent et
his qui in arce manserunt nocere velint: nequeunt: qa armis ca
rent: nudi incedūt et nimīū timidi: ideo dictā arcem tenētes dun
taxat pnt totā eam insulam nullo sibi iminēte discrimine popu
lari: dum nō leges quas dedim⁹ ac regimē nō excedāt. In oīb⁹
his insulis vt intellexi quisq; vni tñ iugi acquiescit præter prin
cipes aut reges: quibus viginti bie licet: femine magis q̃ viri la

boiare videntur. nec bene potui intelligere an habeant bona pro-
pria: vidi enim q̄ vnus habebat alijs impartiri: presertim dapes
obsonia ⁊ hmoi. Nullum apud eos monstrū reperi vt pleriq̄ exi-
stimabant: sed hoies magne reuerentię atq̄ benignos. Nec sunt
nigri velut ethiopes. habent crines planos ac demissos. non de-
gūt vbi radioꝝ solaris emicat calor. p̄ magna nanq̄ hic est solis
vehementia: propterea q̄ ab equinoctiali linea distat. Vbi vidē-
tur gradus sex ⁊ viginti ex montiū cacuminib⁹. Maximū quoq̄
viget frigus: sed id q̄dem moderant̄. Indi tum loci consuetudi-
ne. tum rerū calidissimarū quib⁹ frequenter ⁊ luxuriose vescunt̄
presidio. Itaq̄ mōstra aliqua nō vidi: neq̄ eorū alicubi habui co-
gnitionem: excepta quadā insula Charis nuncupata: quę secun-
da ex Hispania in Indiam trans fretantib⁹ existit. quā gens quę
dam a finitimis habita ferocior incolit. Hi carne humana vescū-
tur. Habent predicti biremiū genera plurima quibus in oīs Indi-
cas insulas traiciunt. depredant. surripiunt quęcūq̄ p̄nt. Nihil
ab alijs differunt nisi q̄ gerūt more femineo longos crines. vtū-
tur arcib⁹ ⁊ spiculis arundineis fixis vt dixim⁹ in grossiorē par-
te attenuatis hastilib⁹. ideoq̄ habent̄ feroces: quare ceteri Indi
inerbausto metu plectunt̄: sed hos ego nibilifacio plus q̄ alios
Hi sunt q̄ cobeunt cū quibūsdā feminis: quę solę insulā Mateu-
nin primā ex Hispania in Indiā traicientib⁹ habitant. De aut̄
feminę nullū sui sexus opus exercent: vtuntur enim arcibus et
spiculis sicuti de earū iungibus dixi muniunt sese laminis eneis
quarū maxīma apud eas copīa existit. Aliā mibi insulā affirmāt
supradicta Hispana maiorē: eius incolę carēt pilis. auroq̄ inter
alias potissimū exuberat. Huius insule ⁊ aliarū quas vidi hoies
mecū porto qui horū quę dixi testimoniū perbibēt. Deniq̄ vt nos-
tri discessus ⁊ celeris reuersionis compendiū ac emolumentū
breuib⁹ astringā hoc polliceor: me nostris Regibus inuictissi-
mis paruo eorū fultū auxilio: tantū auri daturū quantū eis fue-
rit opus. tñ vero aromatum. bomicis. masticis: q̄ apud Chium
duntaxat inuenitur: tantūq̄ lignū aloes. tantum seruoꝝ. hydoꝝ

latrozum: quantum eorum maleficia voluerit exigere. Item rebus
barbarum et alia arcumata genera que in quos in dicta arce relict
qui iam inuenisse atque inuenturos existimo. quoniam quidem ego nul
libi magis sum moratus nisi quantum me coegerunt venti: pre
terquam in villa Flatuitatis dum arcem condere et tuta omnia esse pro
uidi. Quare et si maxima et inaudita sunt: multo tamen maiora forent
si naues mihi ut ratio exigit subuenissent. Utpote multum ac mira
bile hoc: nec nostris meritis correspondens: sed sancte Christiana
ne fidei nostrorumque Regum pietati ac religioni: quia quod hu
manus consequi non poterat intellectus: id humanis concessit di
uinus. Soler enim deus seruos suos quique sua precepta diligunt
et in impossibilibus exaudire: ut nobis in presentia contigit: qui
ea consecuti sumus que hactenus mortalium vires minime atti
gerant: nam si harum insularum quipiam aliquid scripserunt aut lo
cuti sunt: omnes per ambages et coniecturas: nemo se eas vidisse
asserit: unde prope ridebatur fabula. Igitur Rex et Regina prin
cepsque ac eorum regna felicissima cunctique alie Christianorum provin
cie Saluatori domino nostro Iesu Christo agamus gratias: qui tan
ta nos victoria munereque donauit: celebrentur processiones: per
agantur solennia sacra: festaque fronde relectur delubra: exultet
Christus in terris quemadmodum in coelis exultat: quem tot
populorum perditas ante hac animas saluatum iri preuidet. Lete
mur et nos: cum propter exaltationem nostre fidei: tum propter
rerum temporalium incrementa: quorum non solum Hispania sed
vniuersa Christianitas est futura particeps. Hec ut gesta sunt
sic breuiter enarrata. Vale. Ulisbonę pridie idus Martij.

Christoforus Colom Oceanę classis Prefectus.

**Epigramma R. L. de Corbaria Episcopi Montispalossij
Ad Inuictissimum Regem Hispaniarum.**

Jam nulla Hispanis tellus addenda triumphis
Atq; parum tantis viribus orbis erat.
Nunc longe eois regio deprensa sub undis
Auctura est titulos Betice magne tuos
Unde repertori merito referenda Columbo
Gratia: sed summo est maior habenda deo.
Qui vincenda parat noua regna tibiq; sibiq;
Neq; simul fortem prestat et esse patrum.



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